

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-6, 9-11 and 13-15 are now pending in the present application. Claims 1, 4, 6, 9-11 and 13 have been amended and claims 2, 3, 7, 8 and 12 have been canceled. Claims 1, 6 and 11 are independent. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Objection to the Drawings

The drawings stand objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.84(I), since all lines, numbers and letters are not uniformly thick and well-defined. As the Examiner will note, six (6) sheets of corrected formal drawings have been provided for the Examiner's consideration. Accordingly, the objection to the drawings has been obviated. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are therefore respectfully requested.

Objection to the Specification

The specification stands objected to because the Abstract of the Disclosure is more than 150 words and includes a minor informality. As the Examiner will note, the Abstract has been corrected to be the less than 150 words long and to correct the minor informality mentioned by the Examiner. Accordingly, the specification is now in proper form. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the specification objection are therefore respectfully requested.

Objection to the Claims

Claims 3, 4, 8, 9, 12 and 13 stand objected to because they include reference characters which are not enclosed within parenthesis. As the Examiner will note, the claims have been amended to remove the reference characters therefrom. Accordingly, the claim objection has been obviated. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are therefore respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As the Examiner will note, claim 10 has been amended to depend from claim 6. Accordingly, claim 10 is now definite and clear. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph are therefore respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 2, 5-7, 10, 11, 14 and 15 stand rejected 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Machida et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

At the outset, it is respectfully pointed out that claims 2 and 7 have been canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Accordingly, the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 has been rendered moot with regard to these claims.

With regard to independent claim 1, this claim has been amended to include the subject matter of dependent claims 2 and 3, which have been canceled. In addition, independent claim 6 has been amended to include the subject matter of dependent claims 7 and 8 and independent claim 11 has been amended to include the subject matter of dependent claim 12. Claims 7, 8 and 12 have been canceled.

In the Examiner's Office Action, the Examiner has indicated that claims 3, 8 and 12 include allowable subject matter. Since this subject matter has now been added to independent claims 1, 6 and 11, respectively, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 6 and 11 are now in condition for allowance.

With regard to dependent claims 5, 10, 14 and 15, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are allowable due to their respective dependence upon allowable independent claims 1, 6 and 11, as well as due to the additional recitations in these claims.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 5, 6, 10, 11, 14 and 15 clearly define the present invention over the Machida et al. reference relied on by the Examiner. Accordingly, Reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 are respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 3, 4, 8, 9, 12 and 13 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants greatly appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter by the Examiner.

By the present Amendment, claims 3, 8 and 12 have been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Specifically, the subject matter of claims 3, 8 and 12, including any intervening claims, have been added to independent claims 1, 6 and 11, respectively. Accordingly, independent claims 1, 6 and 11 and dependent claims 4, 5, 9, 10 and 13-15 should now be in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and early allowance of the present application are therefore respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining references cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but merely to show the state-of-the-art, no further comments are deemed necessary with respect thereto.

All the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed and/or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently pending rejections and that they be withdrawn.

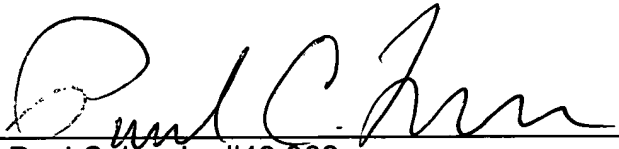
It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Paul C. Lewis, Registration No. 43,368 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By 
Paul C. Lewis, #43,368

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0505-1222P

Attachment(s)

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000